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ON SOME SAVAGE CUSTOMS OF GREAT BRITAIN:

ESPECIALLY THAT OF AFTER-DINNER SPEAKING.

THE miseries of human life, says the philosopher, are few indeed which laws can cause or cure; but he does not venture to include Custom. The necessity of doing the usual thing—that is, of following the precedents laid down by the great mass of society, who unhappily are neither wise nor witty—adds very much to those evils to which flesh is heir. The dull man makes a great point of fully attiring himself in black broad-cloth, in order to dine with fourteen other dull men upon a mid-summer night; the sixteenth man, whom (taking a generous average) we will suppose to be a sensible person, has to do the like. It takes a man of genius resolutely to refuse to put himself to this inconvenience, even where only men are concerned. If there are ladies in the case, he regrets the circumstance, but of course attires himself accordingly.

In the very hottest noontide of July, there is not a gentleman in England who dare walk down Regent Street in the wide-awake, or other head-covering adapted to the state of the thermometer, which he wears everywhere else except in London.

Nobody who dines, as a guest, in Belgrave Square ventures to ask one of those ridiculous footmen—with the flour in their hair (though not, of course, a camelia, as is the case with his lovely and accomplished neighbour)—for a glass of table-beer, although he may prefer it to all the vintages of France and Spain.

There is more than one club in Pall Mall where it is held indecorous to bring a pipe into the smoking-room, the society (of whom five-sixths are pipe-smokers) being 'so very genteel.'

If my uncle dies at St Petersburg, I am obliged to impart the sad intelligence to the population of the metropolis by pulling down my dining-room blinds in Baker Street, a chamber which is not well lighted at the best of times. If he had died of sun-stroke at Hong-kong, one can imagine friends being requested to accept the information in that form; but since it was otherwise, why should I

light my gas two hours earlier than usual? It is surely not a subject for an illumination.

It is not supposed, I believe, even by Mr Darwin, that man originally walked backwards, and only from long practice eventually attained to his present mode of progression. Why, then, in the presence of royalty, do we perform the stupid and dangerous evolution of 'backing' out of the room? It is surely a poor compliment to Majesty to credit it with such little sense as to be pleased with so awkward a manoeuvre. How wonderful that folks who do such things every day—and at night with lighted candles in their hands—could not keep their countenances when the Siamese ambassadors approached the steps of the throne upon all-fours! Such a proceeding was surely far more fitting, since the apparent object of both sorts of courtiers is to degrade themselves to the level of the beasts.

How blind, however, we can be to our own absurdities, while intolerant of those of our neighbours, was never more clearly shewn than on a late occasion, when a learned—and what is much better, a generally sensible—judge, found fault with a Quaker for keeping his head covered in court. Conceive a gentleman in a horse-hair wig eighteen inches long, and a red gown which has to be held up for him if he would walk, finding fault with a man's *hat*! How a judge is dressed, however, is a matter entirely between himself and the criminal classes, and I believe their chief objection to him is his wearing an article of apparel which is certainly not often seen within doors—namely, a Black Cap.

For my part, I have only to ask why ordinary gentlemen *will* come into my drawing-room with a crush-hat tucked under their arms? If they are afraid of it being stolen, if left below stairs, why do they not bring up their great-coats also? Are *Gibus*es so very rare that they are thus offered to the inspection of the ladies of my family, like a Jack-in-the-Box; or is it that these persons are unable to join in polite conversation without having something to 'fiddle' with? Suppose I was to bring up my umbrella, and amuse myself by opening and shutting *that*!

But the greatest nuisance I have to complain of with which society has saddled us, without the least necessity, is the custom of after-dinner speeches. In the case of ministers and public characters who are asked to dinner by committees, it is all very well; they are (in one way or another) paid to speak, and the people who meet them like to hear them. It is a strange taste to wish to receive information so immediately after food, but I am of a catholic temper, and have not the least objection to the mistakes of my fellow-creatures so long as they do not affect myself. But unfortunately this matter *does* affect me.

When more than eighteen people (of the male sex) dine together (for to do society justice, nobody is now permitted to propose a toast at a private party), there is always a chance of somebody rising 'with permission of the chair,' and making me uncomfortable. Now, why does he do that? Is he aware that with the exception of Mr Bright, Mr Gladstone, Mr Disraeli, and Mr Dickens, there are not half-a-dozen men in England who can say anything *extempore* worth hearing; or does he suppose that he is one of those six? Do I, or anybody present (although we may madly rap the table with the handles of our dessert-knives), care three farthings for what he thinks upon the subject he has chosen to dilate upon, even at his best; or does he imagine that, gorged with food and drink, he is in a better condition than usual for expressing these commonplace ideas of his! If he really believes what he says, namely, that 'he feels it his duty to get up and say a few words, &c.,' he deserves, indeed, consignment to a lunatic asylum, and a strait-waistcoat to keep him quiet in the cab. But the fact is, he is lying, and he knows it. While he talks about his want of eloquence (when we all cry 'No, no'), he in his heart believes himself to be a Kossuth in that respect. He is a foolish, vain, impertinent, false man. Why is the pleasant conversation of my next neighbour (who has read my works, I find, and likes them) to be totally interrupted, and silence to be proclaimed for this ridiculous coxcomb, who happens to have the gift of talking on his hind-legs! I protest against it, in the name of those down-trodden myriads who are forced to cry 'Hear, hear' with their lips, while their minds are full of bitterness and contempt. Who wants to hear what he has to say about the Queen and the Royal Family, and the Memory of his Royal Highness the Prince Consort! Who cares whether he approves or not of the institutions of the Army and Navy! Who feels the slightest interest in the fact, that this fellow can lay his hand upon his heart while he patronises the Church of England; or what member of that establishment would not, on the whole, be rather pleased than not to find that such a stick was a Dissenter! Why these eulogies upon the House of Peers, for instance, as though they had departed from us that afternoon, and were never more to be heard of, save upon this momentous occasion!—which is, unhappily, far from being the case. It is my belief that if there were no after-dinner speeches, the Conservative party would find themselves great gainers; it is impossible to listen long without feeling some disgust at the innocent objects of such misplaced panegyrics. Why should not 'Vaccination and may it take,' be proposed with as much reason as 'the Bench of Bishops!' For my own part, I admire both institutions, but I

don't want to hear Mr Anybody's views upon them immediately after dinner. Do let us stop it, do.

Let some public testimonial be subscribed for at once, and presented to that Venezuelan envoy, who, at a dinner at the Mansion House, in December last, returned thanks for the Foreign Ambassadors in these remarkable words: 'God save the Queen.' It was mentioned by way of apology, that that was the only sentence in the English tongue with which His 'Excellency was acquainted. But surely there was no necessity for any such excuse. Was not his observation pregnant with piety, with loyalty, and with brevity, which is the soul of wit? Was it not secure of the adhesion of those present? Did it not carefully steer clear of all things that could compromise or embarrass his government at home? Finally, was it not infinitely preferable to the most ornate and studied oration which should attempt to describe those outlandish parts from which he hailed, on the situation of which in the map not a F.R.G.S. present could probably have set his finger; and about 'the reciprocal feelings of amity' entertained by whose inhabitants the Lord Mayor and his guests must have taken an exceptional quantity of liquor if they believed one word.

Again, should not something be done to rescue from oblivion the name of that Australian landed proprietor who resolutely refused to open his lips at a public dinner given in his honour at the capital, and designed as a tribute to Endeavour and Perseverance, as exemplified in his own rise from a very humble rank.

'Gentlemen,' said he, 'what you have said is doubtless true, and certainly agreeable, but I never made but one speech in my life before any large number of people, and short as it was, the result was so unfortunate, that I made up my mind never to make another.' Upon cross-examination, it turned out that he alluded to his own trial at the Old Bailey about half a century ago, and that the speech he had made was: 'Not guilty, my Lord;' in spite of which he had been transported for life.

Unhappily, it is not everybody who has the moral courage to decline to make an exhibition of himself, just because his health is proposed, or because he finds himself suddenly made spokesman, by some pestilent fellow, to return thanks for somebody else. Suppose, while the folks were assembling before dinner, some guest had been requested to utter a few remarks about nothing particular at the top of his voice, is it likely he would have done it? Would he not have replied with asperity: 'Sir, I have nothing to say upon the subject you mention, and certainly nothing worth the attention of this large and respectable company.' And is it to be imagined that this poor fellow is in a more intelligent condition *after* dinner than before. Wine may give a man audacity, but it has been justly remarked that it is the enemy which he puts into his mouth to steal away his brains.

The classes of people to whom the savage custom of after-dinner speaking is due are two—first, the Proposers of Healths, who are, of course, the origin of the evil, and deserve the greatest obloquy; and, secondly, the Returners of Thanks, who, as 'accessories after the fact,' are almost as culpable, and without whose connivance, the nuisance could not exist. The former have naturally, or think they have, what is vulgarly called the Gift of the Gab, and seize

upon every opportunity to exhibit it. The professional after-dinner speaker—the fellow who never misses a chance of ‘asking the permission of his friend in the chair, &c.’—feels the same sort of craving, I fancy, as the drunkard for spirits, and exhibits the like hideous relish for his pleasure: he moistens his lips before commencing, loosens his cravat, pushes his chair well back, and gives a short sharp bow, which one wishes would crick his neck. As there is no reason which we can see why he should have got upon his legs, so there is none that he can see why he should sit down. Words, unfortunately, do not fail him (although he often tells us they do), and what, I daresay, he calls his thoughts, are the merest platitudes and commonplaces.

You may know how dull he is by the fact, that if he happens to deliver himself of the smallest joking, which in his ordinary conversation we should pass over in silence, and the charitable hope that such a thing would not occur again, it is received with the most uproarious applause. It is such a relief to laugh, to rap the table (since we cannot hit him), to do anything, in short, instead of listening to his hackneyed tropes, which fall like the ceaseless ‘drip, drip, drip’ of water (so popular with the Holy Inquisition) upon the tortured brain. When Boanerges has done, too, we, of course, break out into an ecstasy, the cause of which his vanity causes him to utterly misconstrue. Our mock-applause, in fact, is the garbage on which he feeds; it strengthens all that is capable of strength within him—that is, it gives him wind and words—and no sooner has it subsided, than he gets up again, smirking and smiling, to inform us that he has made a sad omission in not proposing a toast (here his voice sinks to what he believes is Pathos, but it ought to be spelt with a B)—‘a toast which he is sure that every one here present, whatever opinions he may hold, and whatever convictions he may entertain, will drink with the utmost pleasure and enthusiasm; a toast such as will evoke not only cheers from the lip, but the best wishes of our human hearts, &c. He will, however, detain us no longer; but, without further preface’ [after this comes a long one], ‘he will beg to propose—he dares say we have all anticipated him’ [so we have: some of us think it’s ‘the Queen,’ others, the ‘New Reform Bill,’ nobody is right]—‘he only need mention the name of our estimable friend here present, Mr John Smith.’

Nine of this man’s hearers out of every ten earnestly wish that he spoke nothing but Venezuelan; but John Smith himself is almost moved to hurl a decanter at him. He, poor fellow, belongs to the No. 2 class of after-dinner speakers, and has no gift of the gab whatever. It is just as cruel and cowardly to compel that worthy and inoffensive person to speak in public, as it would be to ask a blind man what he thinks of the rainbow. Boanerges knows this very well; the forthcoming exhibition will afford the better foil to his own oratorical performance. There is a long and painful pause. The real fact is, that Smith, being a sensible person, is searching for an idea that may be worth the attention of the company; or having found, is clothing it with any scanty garment of words that he can lay his hand on. A violent rapping of the table, intended to encourage him, puts idea and words alike to flight; but he rises in obedience to the call, and stammers and staggers

through a few involutions and repetitions, until he judges that his tormentors must be satisfied, when he sits down sorry to have made such a fool of himself. To all persons of sensitive and kindly natures, he has afforded unmixed pain; to others, amusement; and to Boanerges, triumph. If it is really essential that Mr John Smith’s health (or anybody’s) should be proposed at all, let the victim have due notice; almost every man can compose, in the quiet of his chamber, a few fitting remarks, and learn them by heart; repeating them to himself, if he pleases, with appropriate action, in the silent watches of the night, or at other periods when removed from the public eye. He will thus be, doubtless, made rather uncomfortable for a few days, and will certainly not enjoy the dinner after which the honour in question is to be conferred upon him (if you sit next him, you will hear a low recitative between the courses, which is the rehearsal of the coming speech): but, at all events, he will not lose his self-respect, or give an opportunity for malignant joy to Boanerges.

When, however, any worthy gentleman may not happen to have received this warning, and finds himself called upon to ‘return thanks’ upon a sudden, without the *de quoi*, I beg to recommend the following brief formula, first heard from the lips of a certain mathematician of my acquaintance, any one of whose thoughts would supply Boanerges with ideas for life, but whose words are not winged.

‘Gentlemen,’ said he, when his health was proposed at his own fellowship-dinner, ‘a morbid desire for originality prevents me from saying that *This is the proudest moment of my life*; and it does not occur to me to say anything else.’

If this reply was generally adopted, I think the savage custom of after-dinner speaking at social meetings would be a good deal checked: let me recommend Mr Smith to try it.

For the gratification of my readers, I may add that this about-to-be-benefactor of his species is on the high road—for nobody has to make ‘a charge’ *extempore*—to be a Bishop; and, in my opinion, he deserves nothing less than one day to write himself ‘Cantuar.’

MIRK ABBEY.

CHAPTER XIV.—ONCE MORE IN MY LADY’S CHAMBER.

As my Lady left the churchyard by the wicket-gate, she caught the flutter of a female dress that flitted on before her, and vanished in the regions belonging to the domestics. Was it possible that anybody had been a witness to her late interview, or worse, a listener to the conversation? It was in the highest degree improbable, but not impossible. By crouching down behind the low stone wall, next Sir Robert’s tomb, a person in the Abbey grounds, without doubt, could have overheard, and even, with caution, might have watched them. It chilled my Lady’s heart to think of it. Yet what could be more unlikely? What servant of hers would have ventured upon such an outrage? Could Mary Forest have so far forgotten herself, actuated by an irrepressible curiosity to hear what her mistress and her lover could have to say to one another at that strange time and place? It was much more probable that some domestic about to use the

short-cut through the churchyard, had seen her coming from it, and hastened back, to avoid a meeting. At the same time, the suspicion added to my Lady's troubles.

These were serious and pressing enough already, Heaven help her! and yet, urgent and perilous as they were, it was not of them that she first thought when she found herself once more in her own room. There are no circumstances, however tremendous, which have power to quench the susceptibilities of women; their feelings must have way, no matter how dangerous the indulgence in them, how immediate the necessity for action. The meshes of a net which threatened destruction to herself and all that were dear to her were closing in around Lady Lisgard, and, calm as she looked, she knew it well—well as the wily salmon that poises motionless, and seemingly unconscious of his peril, in the red pool, below which the fisherman has set the spreading snare; but my Lady turns her back for a little upon the tide of woes that is setting in upon her—a spring-tide that may reach Heaven knows how far—and seeks the inland Past. It is the last time that she will ever visit it, and therefore she cannot choose but linger there a while, and shed some bitter tears. Her door is locked, for none must see her wishing 'Good-bye,' and the windows are wide open to the air, which blows the flame of her reading-lamp hither and thither. She needs air, poor lady. A waft of wind that has swept some snowy steppe would have been grateful to her throbbing brow that April night; and as for light, a very little is enough for her purpose. Those few old letters she is reading, taken from a secret drawer in my Lady's desk, are as familiar to her as her prayers, and she seems to hold them almost as sacred. Yet one is not even a letter, but only a piece of folded note-paper, torn at the creases, and yellow—nay, yellower than mere age could possibly have turned it. It has been damaged by sea-water. Within it are two locks of hair, quite white, and a few words in faded ink, *Frank Meade* and *Rachel Meade*, with a date of five-and-thirty years ago.

She takes out the silver tresses, and looking on them reverently for a few moments, kisses them, and puts them back in the secret drawer—but not the writing; that she holds above the lamp until it has caught fire, and watches it until it is quite consumed, and the last spark has gone out. Then she brings forth from the same hiding-place two letters, evidently both by the same hand—a very unclerkly one—ill-spelled and ill-composed, but which have been to her more dear than any written words for a quarter of a century; for they were letters of a dead man, written, the one when he was her accepted lover, the other after he became her husband. They are letters of the Dead no longer; for he who was thought to have died is still alive, and being so, has become an enemy more terrible than any who should seek her life; one who, by simply saying: 'This is my wife,' would thereby dishonour her, disgrace her children, and even shame the memory of that righteous man whose tomb she had just visited, and wept over with such honest tears. And yet with tenderness, though mixed with a certain awe and shrinking, does my Lady look upon those time-worn words, notwithstanding that the sacredness of Death is no longer on them. The first is what is called a love-letter, a note filled with foolish fondness, expressed with vehemence, but without coarseness; the

second a tissue of passionate self-reproaches; the writer accusing himself of bringing a curse upon her happy home in having married her; then stating, as though reluctantly, certain arrangements he had made at the seaport, from which his communication was dated, for the passage of herself and parents by the *North Star*. Both are signed *Ralph Gavestone*.

'So loving and so penitent,' murmurs she. 'Time cannot surely have worked so ill with such a nature as he would have me believe! When he first sang that carol to my ear, I thought it might have been an angel singing:

O'er the hill and o'er the vale
Come three kings together.

Alas, alas! to think with what terror I heard him sing it the last time. He may not be more changed within, perhaps, than he is without; since, notwithstanding what he said about his looks, I knew him again the first moment my eye lit upon him on yonder lawn. I wonder whether he would have known me, supposing he had snatched away my veil. Merciful Heaven, what a risk was that! nay, is not every moment that he remains at Mirk a risk! What if he heard the name of Gavestone coupled with mine? I am sure he recognised something in my voice, although I disguised it all I could. He must never come back hither—never, never! He must be as dead to me now as I deemed him to be before. God knows I pity him from the bottom of my heart: and also—here she paused—'yes, and also that I do not love him—no, not him, although I love the man that wrote these words. I never concealed it, no, never, from my—Sir Robert himself. I said: "I have no love to give you," all along; "only respect, devotion, duty." And those, Heaven knows, I gave. If all together, and a hundred other gracious feelings added, could have made up love, then Sir Robert would have had that; but they can not. He knew it, noble heart, and was content. He knew that in that drawer I kept these very things that came on shore with me when—O Ralph, Ralph, Ralph!' My Lady shook with sobs; and then, in her agony, mistaking the noise of her own passion for some interruption from without, started up from the desk on which she had thrown herself, and listened.

Nothing was to be heard save a faint peal of laughter from the croquet-ground, where Walter and the two young ladies were endeavouring to play by lantern-light—a frolic she had heard them planning at dinner-time. Yet even that slight tidings from the world without recalled her to the present. 'I must burn all proofs,' she murmured, as though repeating some authoritative command of another rather than any determination of her own. Then with a steady hand she took the letters, and burned them to the last atom, reading the words with greediness, as though, as the flame consumed them one by one, the remainder had grown more precious, like the Sibyl's books. There was more to try her yet. The last thing which the little drawer contained had yet to be brought forth—a leaden locket, the facsimile of the one which Derriek had just shewn to her in the churchyard. Within, although almost, as he had expressed it, 'dried to dust,' was a tiny sprig of wood. She emptied this into the hollow of her hand, and instantly the wind whirled all away. My Lady uttered a low moan of anguish, then sat with the

poor token in her hand, which, worthless and vacant as it was, yet, to her streaming eyes, held all the treasure of her youth. 'Alas, alas, for the time that is no more!' cried she. 'Who could have thought that I, with my own hand, should destroy this precious pledge? Kind Heaven, direct me—teach me what it is right to do! Till death should part us, did I swear to cherish him; and now, though we both live, alone he roves the world. It may be I should win him back to his former self, and save a soul alive. He has loved me always—always; and he loves me now, although he deems I have lain beneath the waves these thirty years, and although he seeks— But that shall never be. I will tell Mary Forest rather to her face: "I myself am married to this man whom you would wed." He shall not bring another sin upon himself and shame on her, and— Ah, Heaven help me; what is that which I should do in this sad strait?'

It was terrible to see my Lady's look of woe, as, rising from her chair, she paced the room, and now prayed Heaven for aid, and now stood listening to the mirth that still broke in from out of doors by fits, and now gazed fixedly upon the little leaden case within her hand, as though there were some magic help in that. 'Farewell, Lucy,' murmured she; 'the last words that I ever thought to hear him say, which, having said, he dropped, to save my life, into the wave. And now I see him storm-tossed in the sea of sin, certain to sink, without a plank but this poor ancient love of his to which to cling, and yet I may not stretch a finger forth to aid him. Ah me, what base return! Why did I not cleave to him, although I thought him dead, as he to me? Why was I not faithful to his memory, as he to mine? Why say: "In three years' time, Sir Robert, if your fancy still holds firm, I will be yours?" Why not repeat that "No" I gave him first? Then, earning my own living as I was born to earn it, I might have lived on alone until this day, when, meeting with my poor lost Ralph once more, I could, without a blush of shame, cry "Husband!" and be to him indeed the guardian angel his love paints I was. Heaven knows, I wish it for his sake alone. I wish for nothing for myself but Death—yes, that would be best of all, a thousand times.'

My Lady's once plump face looked pinched and worn, almost as though the Shadow for which she sighed was really nigh; her anxious eyes, not softened by her tears, peered timorous as a hare's to left and right, as though the tenanted room held some one who could read her secret soul. Then sitting down upon the sofa, with her hands clenched before her, she stared out upon the twilight, deepening down upon the windmill on the hill. But presently, 'Forgive me these black thoughts,' prayed she with inward shudder. 'If, as they say, the place reserved for the wicked is filled with those who have promised themselves to do some good, and have not done it, then haply those who in their minds revolve some deadly sin which they do not commit, may be forgiven. I will not, with God's blessing, thus transgress again. I know that that is wrong, and prompted by the devil; but which is right and which is wrong in this' (once more her eyes fell piteously upon the locket in her hand)—'Lord help me in this trial.'

Here Walter's ringing voice was heard upon the lawn beneath: 'Never mind pulling up the rings,

Letty; they are the best burglar-trap a householder can lay; only bring in the mallets and balls.'

'My Walter!' exclaimed my Lady, starting up with haste. 'Have I forgotten you, then? My proud Sir Richard, too, disgraced, dishonoured, shall men call you bastard? My sweet Letty—never, never, never!' As though she dared not trust herself to think, she kept repeating that sad word: then thrusting the dear token in the centre of the wood and coals that were laid in the fireplace ready for the match, she set all alight.

'Better for one to suffer than for three,' she muttered to herself. 'The die is cast. I am my Lady still. I would my heart could melt away like this dull lead, and weigh me down no more, and with this last relic of the past, that every thought of it might likewise perish. It can never be, I know. While this my life still holds—a life of lies, a whited sepulchre—this sting will never lose its venom—never, never!—Shade of the dead,' cried she with vehemence, turning toward the old church-tower, which stood up black against the rising moon, 'I charge you, witness what I do for you and yours! Here, in this flame, I sacrifice not only this poor token, but the man that was my husband; nay, who is, the man that I once loved, nay, whom I love now; the man that laid his life down for my sake, with those two words, just "Farewell, Lucy." Great Heaven, is not this enough? Surely, now all will go well—save for him and me. Is this too much to ask? . . . Forgive, forgive: I know not what I said. Teach me to be humble, patient under every blow, and no more vain regrets. I must act at once. What did Arthur say? "The matter lay in my own hands," said he, whether this man should stay at Mirk or not. How little did he know with what truth he spoke! And I must speak to Mary without delay, for that I alone could stop her marriage with this man. How true again! Well, I will do it.'

Then my Lady washed her swollen eyes, and smoothed her hair, all tangled and escaped from its sober bonds, unturned the door-key, and having rung her bell, awaited with the lamp so placed that it threw her face in shadow, the coming of her waiting-maid.

CHAPTER XV.—MISTRESS AND MAID.

'Mary,' said Lady Lisgard gravely, when her attendant had closed the door behind her, 'I want to have a little serious talk with you to-night.'

'As you please, my Lady,' returned Mistress Forest, in a tone which the other did not fail to mark: it was a very respectful tone—a more humble one even than she was ordinarily wont to use—but there was a certain deliberation and set resolve about it too, which expressed as decidedly, as though she had used the words: 'I am ready to listen, madam; but I know very well what you are going to ask me, and I have made up my mind already to answer "No."'

'Mary,' continued my Lady earnestly, but not without a tremor in her kind soft voice, 'come and sit here on the sofa beside me, and let us not be mistress and maid to-night, but only friends.'

'Yes, madam,' and Mary's voice trembled too, for this unlooked-for arrangement would place her, she knew, at a disadvantage in the argument which was certainly at hand. 'We have known one another many, many years, Mary—more than half

our lives—and I don't think we have had a single quarrel yet.'

'Not one, ma'am, not one,' assented the waiting-maid; already, after the manner of her susceptible kind, beginning to cry.

'I can remember you when quite a child, Mary; not fifteen years old; as willing and kind-hearted a girl as the sun ever shone upon; and when I had not a friend in the world, nor even so much as a coin that I could call my own, and when I was weak and sick at heart, having lost all that was dear to me, I remember who it was that tended and caressed me as though I was her own sister.'

'Don't ye, don't ye, my Lady; hush, hush!' cried the weeping Mary. 'It was only natural that I should take to a sweet innocent creature cast at our very door by the raging sea. I often dream of that storm o' nights, madam, even now; of the thunder, and the lightning, and the rain; and of the flashes that were not lightning, but signals for help—that, alas! we could not give—from the poor doomed ship. And how father and the other fishermen, and many of the visitors themselves—and among them poor Sir Robert—all crowded down to the Cove, for they could not get nearer to the shore because of the waves; and I was with them, sheltering myself in the brushwood as well as I could, and peering through the branches to see the great white waves lit up for an instant, and then the darkness shutting all things out except the roaring of the storm. I mind it just as though it were but yesterday; and ah! my Lady, shall I ever forget when that one great wave dashed up into the very Cove itself, wetting us all to the skin, and knocking down young Jack West, whom it almost carried back with it in its return, and then the Great Black Spar, which it did carry back, with something white a-clinging to it; when my father cried out: "O my God, a woman!" and all our hearts seemed stricken with a sudden shoot of pain. Lord! how I cried, for my part, to think that a poor creature should be tossing in that dreadful foam; and when I heard good Sir Robert's voice, clear and loud as a bugle: "One hundred pounds to the man who brings her ashore, dead or alive!" I do believe I could have run out and kissed him. Ah, my Lady, what a noble gentleman he was; for though he could not have known how dear you were to be to him—you might have been an old woman, for all he could see—how he worked and strove to save you; not by his money alone, for no mere gain would have tempted men to do what was done that night, but by risking life and limb. They made a double chain, holding one another's hands, for there was no time to spare for ropes, and went down almost among the breakers, where you were: my father and Sir Robert were the two first men, God bless them!'

Here Mistress Forest paused, interrupted by incipient hysterics, and my Lady herself cried like a child, but not in agony; her tears were tribute to the memory of a gallant deed.

'I mind my father had a black shoulder—a place you could not cover with both your hands—all along of the spar being driven up against him, but they carried it up with you upon it safe into the Cove, and then there was a great cry for us women to come down and help. Ah, how beautiful you looked, my Lady, though we thought you dead, white, and cold, and wet, with your long black hair dripping like sea-weed, and your tender

limbs all bruised and bleeding. It must have been a kind hand as tied you to the plank, for between your dainty waist and the rough rope there was bound a sailor's jacket.'

My Lady moaned, and held her hands up as though she would say, 'Forbear!' but Mistress Forest could not be stayed.

'There was little enough clothes upon you, poor Lady, just a bodice and a petticoat, but round your neck there was hung a charm or two, and perhaps that had some hand in saving you from drowning.'

My Lady looked quickly up; how strange it seemed that the comment passed by Mary Forest upon the locket (and the bundle of letters in their little waterproof case) should have been so exactly what Derrick had pointed out it would be. The coincidence reminded her of the task that lay before her, and of the danger of delaying it.

'Yes, Mary, I indeed owe my life to you and yours, and I am not forgetful of the debt. Your welfare is, and ever will be, only second in importance to that of my own children, and it is concerning it that I now wish to speak with you. Your future'—

'You owe me nothing, my dear Lady, that you have not paid again and again, I am sure,' interrupted the waiting-maid hurriedly. 'When you rose to that high station, for which it seems to everybody you were born, your hand was always held out to me; through good report and evil report, you have ever stood my friend: it will be a great wrench of my heart, dearest mistress, when I leave your service—as I shall have to do, I fear, very soon.'

'Mary!'

'Yes, my Lady. You see I'm not a young girl now; and it is not everybody who has so good a chance as I have now of—of—settling in life. Service is not inheritance, you know, my Lady, although I am well aware I should never want for nothing'—

'Whether I live or die, Mary,' broke in her mistress eagerly, 'I have taken care of that, good friend; and if I should die to-morrow— But you shall see my will itself, for it lies here.'

She laid her hand upon the desk before her, but Mary checked her with a determined 'No, my Lady; no. I was never greedy—with all my faults, you will grant that much, I know—and if I had been like Mrs Welsh, and others of this household I could name—but that I never was a mischief-maker—I might long since have put myself beyond all need of legacies, and you never would have missed it. But Mr Derrick is himself a person of property; a very rich man indeed for one in my condition of life—not that I need be a burden upon any man, thank Heaven, for I have money saved out of my wages—and very handsome they always were—and that great present of good Sir Robert's still untouched: the most generous of gentlemen he was. I am sure, my Lady, nobody felt for you as I did when Sir Robert died; and you have often said how terrible it was to lose a husband; therefore'—here for a moment her excessive volubility flagged for the first time; she paused, and reddened, then added, with the air of a mathematician stating an indisputable corollary—'therefore, you must allow, dear mistress, that to find one—particularly when one comes to my time of life—is not unpleasant, nor a chance to be lightly thrown aside.'

'That depends entirely upon the sort of husband he may be, Mary,' observed my Lady gravely.

'Really, dear madam, with all respect, I think I am the best judge of that,' rejoined the waiting-maid tartly; 'although, indeed, I never thought to say such words to you. Sir Richard may have his likes and dislikes, but I am not his slave; nor yet his servant, for the matter of that. While Master Walter, who, saving your presence, everybody knows to be worth a hundred of him, likes Ralph very much.'

A pang shot across my Lady's face, and left it crimson, as though she had received a blow; but the waiting-maid little knew what had brought the colour there, although she felt that she had pained her mistress deeply.

'God forgive me,' cried she penitently, 'if my foolish tongue has hurt your feelings, my Lady! I did not mean to say aught against Sir Richard, I am sure. I scarcely knew what I said, for when those are dear to us—as Ralph has grown to be with me, and I don't deny it—are misjudged and wronged, why, then, we are apt to say bitter things. This talk was none of my seeking, my Lady; and although Ralph thinks that you are to blame because of his being forbidden the Hall, and all the rest of it, I have always told him you have never said a word to set me against him; and oh, I am sorry you are doing it now, because what is done cannot be undone, and—'

'Great Heaven! you are not married to this man?' cried my Lady, rising from her seat with agitation.

'O no, my Lady—certainly not, my Lady,' rejoined the waiting-maid with a certain demure dignity. 'There has been nothing underhand between us in the matter at all, except, that is, so far as meeting Mr Derrick at the back gate.'—

'Did you go out to meet him to-night?' inquired Lady Lisgard sharply, and keeping her eyes fixed steadily upon her attendant's face.

'No, madam, I did not.'

'She is speaking truth,' murmured my Lady to herself. 'Who, then, could it be whom I saw upon the churchyard path just now?'

'Although,' continued Mistress Forest quietly, 'I don't deny that I have often met him after dusk, no other time being permitted to us; but to-day he has gone to town.'

'And you are to write to him thither to give him your final decision as to whether you will become his wife or not.'

'How on earth do you know that, my Lady?' inquired the waiting-maid with a curiosity even beyond her indignation.

'I do know it, dear old friend,' answered Lady Lisgard tenderly, 'and it is because of that knowledge that I have sent for you to-night, to strive to persuade you to write "No," while there is yet time.'

It was very seldom—not once in a year, perhaps—that Mary Forest was ever out of temper with my Lady; but then such a supreme occasion as the present had never occurred before. Underneath their mere superficial relation of mistress and servant, they were more like elder and younger sister; but then even sisters quarrel when the one wants the other—generally under some pretence of mere prudence, not to be listened to by a woman of spirit—to give up the man of her choice. The ample countenance of Mistress Forest expressed something more than Decision in the negative;

there was an unpleasant smile upon her pale lips, which seemed to say: 'If you knew what I know, you would know that you are wasting your breath.' She sat with her plump hands folded before her, like a naughty boy that has been put in the corner, but who does not care—nay, more, who knows that he has got a cracker to put presently under his master's chair, the results of which will make full amends for the inconvenience he at present experiences.

'I will say nothing more, Mary, of the mutual esteem and affection between us two, and of the pain that an eternal parting—such as your marriage with this Mr Derrick would most undoubtedly entail—needs must cost us both. I presume that you have weighed that matter in your mind, and found it—however weighty—insufficient to alter your determination?'

Mary nodded, sharply enough, but it was doubtful if she could have spoken. Already her features had lost their rigidity, as though melted by my Lady's touching tones.

'You have known this person—that is to say, you have met him some dozen times—during a period of less than four months; yet such is his influence over you, that you are prepared to sacrifice for him a friend of thirty years' standing, a comfortable home, and a position in which you are respected by all who know you. If I was speaking to a young girl, Mary, I should not advance these arguments; but you are a—wise and sensible woman, and yet not of such a mature age that you need despair of finding a suitable partner for the rest of your life.'

Mistress Forest heaved a little sigh of relief, and her cheeks began to tone down to something like their natural crimson; they had been purple with the apprehension of what my Lady might have said upon the subject of age.

'Now, what is it,' pursued my Lady, 'which has produced this confidence in an almost entire stranger? Do you know anything of his former life, which may be a guarantee to you for the stability of your future? Have you ever met a single individual who is acquainted with it in any way? For all you know, this man may have been a'—

'My Lady!'

For a moment, the relative position of Mentor and pupil were exchanged; there was a quiet power about the waiting-maid's rebuke, for which an archbishop would have given more than his blessing, if he could only have incorporated it into a 'charge.'

'You are right, Mary,' said my Lady frankly; 'let us only speak of what is within our own knowledge. Does this man's own conduct, then, give any promise of lasting happiness to the woman who may become his wife? Is he sober?'

'I believe he is fond of a glass, my Lady, as most men are who have no home, or people to look after them. If he had a wife, he would never go to the public-house at all, perhaps—he tells me so himself.'

My Lady smiled faintly.

'Is he industrious and provident, Mary?'

'He has earned his money hardly enough, my Lady, and it seems only natural that he should now spend a little in enjoying himself.'

'But not fling his money to left and right—I use your own words, dear Mary—and treat every chance companion he comes across to liquor. Do you suppose that at his age he is likely to change habits of this sort?'

'I am not aware, my Lady, that his age is anything against him,' replied the waiting-maid coldly. 'He is not so like to run through his money as if he were younger, and particularly when he has got some one to provide for beside himself. And indeed, so far as money goes, he has thousands of pounds; and if all goes well with him—and something has occurred to-day about which he has sent me a line by hand, dear fellow, by which it has been made almost certain that things *will* go well—he will be a very rich man indeed after a week or two. There is some great race on Epsom Downs'—

'O Mary, how can you talk so cheerfully of money acquired in that way. If it is won to-day, it is lost to-morrow; and even if it were not so, do you know that it is gained from those who can ill afford to lose it, and who, having lost it, often turn to wicked ways?'

'I don't know about that, my Lady, I'm sure,' responded the waiting-maid demurely; 'I leave all these things to my betters. But, I suppose, if racing was a crime, Mr Chifney would not be let to have the Abbey Farm—Sir Richard being so very particular—and Master Walter would not for ever be up at the stables. Why, he and Mr Derrick are both together, hand and glove, in this very business—something about a French racer, it is; although, when you and I were at Dijon, my Lady, we never heard of there being such a thing in all France, did we?—so my poor Ralph cannot be so very wicked after all. And please, ma'am, it is no use saying anything more about it, for I have written him that letter already which he was to find in London, and put it in the post.'

'And did you answer "Yes" or "No," Mary?'

'I answered "Yes," my Lady—that I would marry him—and begging your pardon, madam, but I mean to stand to it.'

SEA-SALTS.

ANY one who has made a veritable sea-voyage cannot have failed to notice the intensely blue colour of the water in certain parts of the ocean. In the vicinity of land, he will have seen the water of a bright green colour, which will be found to prevail until soundings cease to be struck. In the deep unfathomable parts of the ocean, he will have seen the water of so deep a blue as to be fully as dark as the strongest solution of blue vitriol; and even in the regions where deep blue is the general colour of the sea, he may have seen, if he have been in the Gulf Stream, or gone 'down the Trades,' a deeper blue than the deepest, in certain particular localities. There is a current in the China Sea that washes the Aleutian Islands, and is so dark, as compared with the other waters of the ocean, that the Japanese call it the Black Stream. Other ocean-streams there are, and particular portions of the ocean itself, which are more blue than their neighbours. Every West India voyager knows the marvellous blue of the Trade-wind waters.

Some people, even those who are familiar with many facts of physical geography, account for this blue colour by the reflection of the blue firmament in the mirror of the ocean; some ascribe it to the depth of the water, asserting, that if the green water which is found nearer land were piled up in a basin as deep as that which holds the blue water, its colour would then, through some strange

mutation, brought about by volume, be the same dark blue.

Now, while it is certain that the brightness or dulness of the day affects the colour of the deep sea so far as to make that which on a bright sunshiny day is an intense blue, an equally intense black when the day is overcast and sunless, it is quite as certain that the reflection of the firmament has nothing to do with the originally dark colour of the water. If it had, the same effect would be produced on the sea near land, in a less degree, perhaps, but still produced; while, at all events, it would be wrought beyond all question in the great northern seas, when circumstances favoured the reflection—and yet, under no circumstances whatever, is it ever produced upon them. Their waters, no matter how bright the day, or how clear the sky, are ever green.

Then, as to the reason founded on the depth of the sea, the argument based upon the ever-greenness of the unfathomable north seas, applies against it with as much force as it does against the reflection theory. Besides, what would be true of the water near land, in one latitude, would be true of the water near land in another; so that the sea about the Caribbean Islands should be green on soundings as it is green in the English Channel. But, as a matter of fact, it is not so. The waters of Carlisle Bay, Barbadoes; of Kingstown Harbour, St Vincent; and of the West India Islands generally, are almost as blue as the mid-ocean waters. Look down over the side of a vessel anchored in either of the places mentioned, and you will see the bottom, through a medium so blue as to make you think you are lying in a sea of sulphate of copper. There are good reasons why the blue is not so intense as it is further at sea, but it is blue very distinctly, and never under any circumstances is it green.

The true cause of this blue colour of the ocean is to be found in the saltiness of the ocean; and in the case of the West Indian waters, to the absence of those causes which are in full operation in more northern latitudes, and which as clearly mark the seas of those regions to be different from those more southerly, as their respective climates are distinguished by different degrees of heat and cold.

It is observed in the pools or brine-vats of salt-works, that the more concentrated the water the bluer the colour of it, the saltiest of all being of a hue nearly as deep as that of the intertropical waters. The light-green colour of the North Sea and the Polar Seas, is to the blue of more southerly waters what the middle brine-vat is to the vat in which crystallisation takes place; and the Gulf Stream, off the coasts of the Carolinas, and the waters of the Trade-wind region, are to the other waters of the Atlantic what the last vat is to the penultimate vat; that is to say, the dark-blue sea is saltier than the light-green sea, and the deeper the blue the saltier the water.

Now, this difference of density in sea-water is not mere supposition, but an ascertained fact, the amount of saline matter contained in one part differing from that contained in another, in the following proportions, the water of the English Channel being taken as 1: The Baltic Sea, 0.19; the Black Sea, 0.61; Irish Channel, 0.96; Mediterranean, 1.11; ocean at the equator, 1.12; North Atlantic, 1.16; South Atlantic, 1.20; Dead Sea, 10.86. This is only a general statement. Experiment has shewn that the water of the Bay of

Biscay contains three and a half per cent. of salt; the water of the Trade-wind region, four and four-tenths; and that in the Gulf Stream, off Charleston, four per cent.; and similar results might be gathered from tests applied to different parts of other seas. If the blue colour and the difference of density did not speak plainly enough, there is the additional fact, that ships' copper, in the Gulf and Caribbean Sea, is more corroded than in waters north of this latitude, to shew that there are more chemical agents at work in them than in these others.

While the Baltic Sea is, as shewn above, almost brackish, it is reckoned that if all the salt contained in the water annually evaporated from the north-east Trade region of the Atlantic could be heaped into one place, it would cover an area equal to the size of the British Islands to the depth of fourteen feet. The Trade-wind region is the saltiest part of the Atlantic, it having been ascertained that the heaviest water in all that ocean is found between the parallels seventeen degrees north and south of the equator.

Now, although it has been discovered that for certain the salt waters of the globe differ from each other in saltiness, it has never been found that they differ in respect of the actual salts contained. The same ingredients go to embitter the waters of the brackish Baltic Sea that salify those of the mid-ocean; it is only in the distributive proportion that the seas really differ. The salts contained in sea-water, according to an analysis made of a specimen taken off Havre, were found to be as follow: In one thousand parts of water there were thirty-one and a half parts of solid matter; and the solid matter was thus made up: Chloride of sodium (common salt), 24.632; chloride of potassium, 0.307; chloride of calcium, 0.439; chloride of magnesium, 2.564; bromide of magnesium, 0.147; sulphate of lime, 1.097; sulphate of magnesia, 2.146; carbonate of lime (common chalk), 0.176; carbonate of magnesia, 0.078. In some waters there are found other ingredients than these; but they are due to local causes not exerting any wide-spread influence, and they cannot be reckoned among the common components of sea-water.

Why the sea should be salt at all; why, being salt, it should have different densities; whence the salts come; whither they go; what office they have in the economy of nature; and whether 'in the beginning' the sea was salt or fresh—these are all natural questions arising out of the facts ascertained and mentioned above; and most of them can be answered, if not quite satisfactorily, yet with sufficient probability.

That the sea-water should be denser—that is, saltier—in one part than another, is a consequence of the constant operation of causes that of necessity tend to bring about such a result: such are greater evaporation, less rainfall, less importation of fresh water by means of rivers, &c. These three causes are brought to bear upon those regions of the sea where the water is densest. From the Red Sea it is estimated that eight feet of water are annually withdrawn through evaporation only, and this amount will seem to be yet more considerable when it is remembered that there is no river, and hardly even a brook, running into this sea, whereby its waters may be replenished; that its banks are of sand; that there is no rain; and that there is positively no equalising force at work, apart from

the sea itself, to restore the equilibrium disturbed by evaporation. It is not therefore surprising that the Red Sea should be saltier than a sea like the Baltic, where the loss through evaporation is by comparison almost nil, and where the influx of river-water from numerous streams, and the addition derived from heavy annual falls of rain, are very abundant. The amount of saline matter contained in a thousand parts of Baltic Sea water is about twelve parts, while the Red Sea at Suez contains 41 in 1000 parts of water, and at the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, 39.2 in 1000.

In the Trade-wind region, which is the saltiest part of the ocean, evaporation is said to take place to the extent of fifteen feet annually—the salt from this quantity of water being estimated, as already mentioned, to be able to cover the British Islands to the depth of fourteen feet. Here, of course, no rivers can give their assistance towards mitigating the loss sustained, though the rains which at times fall with wonderful liberality are far from being mean refreshers. Still the impoverishing agents are so many more in number, and so much more active than in the latitudes outside the Trades, that they bring about that concentration of brine-making principles which entitles this part to be called, *par excellence*, the water of Marah.

The Indian and Pacific Oceans have each their brine-streams, produced by the same causes that give rise to that in the Atlantic—evaporation, want of rain, absence of rivers—so that, as it is a fact, so it is a necessity, that one part of the ocean should be saltier than another.

But why salt at all? This, too, comes from the nature of things. The rivers which receive from brooks, springs, dew-washings, rain-gatherings, &c., a multitude of soluble matter, also pick up on their own account, as they travel towards the sea, as much saline matter as they find to absorb, and they bring this tribute of themselves and their feudatories to the great receptacle, the Ocean, and cast their burden into its bosom. There the salts, which the fresh-water rivers could not retain, are taken up by the sea-water, soaking into its pores, and are appropriated for those purposes of the ocean which will be declared presently. Certain streams running through soils of a special character collect in their journey the special salts which distinguish those soils, so that they arrive at the ocean laden with contributions different from those brought by their neighbours; but the sea is not therefore more charged with this particular salt, even in the immediate locality where the river empties itself, than it is at other parts, by reason of a beautiful system of compensation and equalisation, which is the principle that sets currents flowing. The ocean is the great reservoir where all the matter which its tributaries have been able to collect is distributed and assigned a place, by agencies the most powerful, yet the most easily set in action, whose work is visible to all who care to inquire into it, and who sing for ever the praise of Him who was their first cause. The salts poured into the ocean cannot get back into the rivers, for obvious reasons, and they are accumulated in one shape or other in the great depository. Evaporation ever going on, the sea-water must ever grow more brine-like, one would think; the salts are continually imported, fresh water is being continually withdrawn, and though restored to it again after the lapse of time, it is chiefly in the shape of an agent which will bring fresh supplies

of saline matter, for the rainfall in the ocean represents only a tithe of its fresh-water receipts, at least in the band of the globe within forty degrees north and south of the equator.

As a matter of fact, however, the sea, although denser in the parts most exposed to causes which deprive it of fresh water, is not becoming brinier, nor is it, so far as can be ascertained, salting up, in the sense of forming great beds of salt at the bottom. The system of Currents, already treated of in a late number of *Chambers's Journal*, rectifies, as between latitudes exposed to impoverishing causes and those not so exposed, the inequality of the supply of salts to them respectively; the heavy and heated waters of the tropics streaming away north and south, carry a full freight of saline matter to be absorbed by the fresher waters, which in their turn, and in obedience to an apparent law, that to every current there shall be a counter-current, rush forth from their colder and fresher climate, like the Norsemen of whom they were prototypes, to seek a home in kindlier and more hospitable regions. So that hereby is the universal sea maintained in its saltiness; and hence comes it that seas from which there is no evaporation, and which receive abundant supplies of fresh water from rivers and otherwise, keep up their character, and do not degenerate into saltless lakes. By this beneficent arrangement, the salt-saturated waters of hot regions are prevented from becoming intolerably briny, and order is maintained in the household of ocean.

But if the ocean receives more salt than it can carry in the pores of its waters, as is alleged it does, and it cannot become saltier by reason of the fact that it cannot hold more than a certain definite quantity of salt in solution, what becomes of the balance which is not needed for keeping up the standard strength of the ocean?

It has been said that, so far as has been ascertained, the ocean is not depositing banks of salt at its bottom, and this is a reasonable conclusion, if we may argue from the analogy furnished by the Mediterranean and Red Seas, not to speak of any more. These two seas receive from their respective ocean-feeders such a supply of saline matter, that in the course of a few hundred years they would become two enormous districts of solid sea-salt, were it not that they are able to ease themselves of all the food which is superfluous to their nourishment. It is a known fact, that neither of them is salting up, and the means by which this operation is avoided are also well ascertained. An under-current of thoroughly saturated water runs oceanwards through the Strait of Gibraltar and the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, conveying again into the ocean the overabundance of food which that liberal caterer provided. The density of the Mediterranean under-current has been found to be four times greater than that of the surface-water; indeed so strong in salt is it, that an eminent surveyor of ocean-phenomena, who was adverse to the theory of the under-current oceanwards, having obtained a sample of this lower stratum of water, was driven to the conclusion that he had struck a 'brine-spring.' But apart from the fact, that 'brine-springs' are not among recognised submarine agents, nothing being known of their existence as a matter of truth, it has been demonstrated in a variety of very satisfactory ways that there is an under-current setting outwards from the Mediterranean through the Strait of Gibraltar.

The same thing may be said of the Red Sea and the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, and of all seas similarly situated. They draw from the ocean-waters such quantities of salt as are required to keep up the standard of their strength, and return the surplus to the giver. They are not salting up.

But then, what becomes of the surplus, which is already large in the ocean itself, and is increased by this return of proffered gifts into its bosom? The same process by which the seas rid themselves of salt is not available for the ocean; on the contrary, it adds to the burden of it. The analogy between the feeder and the fed goes no further than this, that as one is not salting up, so neither is the other: the means by which this identical result is arrived at are wholly different. If the outlets to the Mediterranean Sea were closed, the rivers now falling into it continuing nevertheless to find an outfall there, the result would be a deposit of salt in some shape or other, unless means similar to those adopted in the ocean were resorted to. But an outlet is found for Mediterranean brine, the ocean is relieved by a method which operates to a small extent in some of the inland seas, but is in full activity only where it affords the sole vent for over-saltiness.

There is in the ocean a world of beings, countless in number, infinite in form and size, whose office and duty it seems to be to regulate the density of the waters, to set the breathing apparatus and the current machinery of their world in motion, and while apparently doing no more than is necessary for their own well-being and comfort, to be the founders of empires larger than Charlemagne's, and far more durable. Who are these? Let Schleiden tell us of some of them, in his own words, which cannot be bettered. He is speaking of the bottom of the Indian Ocean:

'Dense masses of Meandrinæ and Astreas contrast with the leafy, cup-shaped expansions of the Explanariæ, the variously ramified Madreporæ, which are now spread out like fingers, now rise in trunk-like branches, and now display the most elegant array of interlacing branches. The colouring surpasses everything: vivid green alternates with brown or yellow; rich tints of purple, from pale red-brown to the deepest blue. Brilliant rosy, yellow, or peach-coloured Nullipores overgrow the decaying masses, and are themselves interwoven with the pearl-coloured plates of the Retipores, resembling the most delicate ivory carvings. Close by wave the yellow and lilac fans, perforated like trellis-work, of the Gorgoniæ. The clear sand of the bottom is covered with the thousand strange forms and tints of the sea-urchins and star-fishes. The leaf-like Flustræ and Escharas adhere like mosses and lichens to the branches of the corals; the yellow, green, and purple-striped Limpets cling like monstrous cochineal insects upon their trunks. Like gigantic cactus-blossoms, sparkling in the most ardent colours, the Sea Anemones expand their crowns of tentacles upon the broken rocks, or more modestly embellish the flat bottom, looking like beds of variegated ranunculuses. Around the blossoms of the coral shrubs play the humming-birds of the ocean—little fish sparkling with red or blue metallic glitter, or gleaming in golden green, or in the brightest silvery lustre. . . .

'Whatever is beautiful, wondrous, or uncommon in the great classes of fish and Echinoderms, jelly-fishes and polypes, and the molluscs of all kinds,

is crowded into the warm and crystal waters of the tropical ocean—rests in the white sands; clothes the rough cliffs; clings, where the room is already occupied, like a parasite, upon the first-comers, or swims through the shallows and depths of the elements.

There are, besides these, that numberless host of microscopic organisms, which, living at the top stratum of the sea, attack the fresh water newly arrived with its salts, take their full of them, and having done their duty by appropriating a minute portion of superfluous salt, sink to the bottom as an atom of solid matter. Then there are the marine plants, drawing upon the treasury of the waters for their sustenance, for a contribution to the Sargasso Seas, the banks of weed, the oceanic garden, which has duties to perform that are but slightly ascertained.

Such are the equalisers of the ocean-strength, such the just weighers of the balance between salt water and brine, such the work-people whom God has appointed to have their place and duty in the world of His sea. The little madrepores, the corallines, have built the Florida Reefs and the Bahama Banks; they have studded the Pacific with atolls, or lagoon islands, and thrown their barrier and encircling reefs round the West India and East India islands, and everywhere that circumstances were favourable to their operations. They and their comrades, the shell-fish of all kinds, appropriate the lime which the sea cannot stomach, and the Diatomaceæ use the silice. Others, whose names are given, some of them above, do their part in the general purification; and all the inhabitants of the ocean—both Fauna and Flora—work together for the common purposes for which they were created, and of these, one undoubtedly is the relief of the medium in which they live from an overweight of that which would injuriously affect their own existence.

So the sea is salt by reason of the earth-washings which are poured into it; it has different densities because of evaporation, rainfalls, and rivers; it is prevented from stagnating by a universal system of ocean-currents; and it yields out of its abundance materials for the building up of continents to be. Such are the conclusions at which science, long labouring, has arrived; such the results of observation by patient, careful men, who, going down to the sea in ships, have seen the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep.

A SHORT-HAND WRITER.

OF all the short-hand writers in the precincts of Lincoln's Inn, Cornelius Bubb stood the highest in matter of inches. He was six feet six, and very thin from constant lack of sleep in term-time. He was known in the Lane as the man in black—he had black clothes, black hair, and black looks. He was very sharp—his walk was sharp, his tongue was sharp, and his pen was sharp. The more business he got, the worse his temper grew; but it was all bark—there was no bite in it. If he scolded a poor wandering short-hand clerk one night, he was none the less ready to give him another job the next, should he happen to call. The most deadly offence in his eyes was correctness. He could be spiteful to clerks who were clever enough to give no occasion for criticism. He gave the

preference over such to clerks who were human, and who erred. These gave a nightly feast to his irony and sarcasm. Disappoint him of his meal, be as sharp and immaculate in copying from your short-hand notes as himself, and you forfeited his friendship for ever. You were a conceited fellow—an unpleasant companion from four P.M. to perhaps the small-hours of the morning.

One Thursday night in November, when Michaelmas Term was a week old, Mr Bubb strode along from his modest dining-place through the cold fog in the Lane towards his office. He stepped quickly up the dark, unlighted staircase, and stooped into his rooms. There were only some thirty or forty folios to write out, and then he was free to use a ticket for the Opera given him by a friend. In the outer or clerks' office, was his established clerk—a boy* of ten years, who lived in the regions below with his mother. There was also a stranger waiting—a young man with a note-book in his hand.

'Nothing to-night,' said Bubb, who could not yet afford to pay others for doing what he could do himself.

The stranger turned to go.

'If you please, sir,' said the boy, 'Hume and Smollet have sent round to say they want the evidence in Jones and Perkins by nine o'clock to-morrow.'

'What!' cried the disappointed playgoer.

The boy repeated his message.

'Why, there's three hundred folios of it, and I've told everybody I shouldn't want them. Run down the Lane, and if you don't find some of them, never shew your useless face here again. Run!'—The boy disappeared on his errand.—'And now,' said Bubb, turning to the stranger, who had lingered, 'you are in for it. There's three hundred folios to do before you leave this office.'

'Very well, sir.'

This philosophic reply caused Bubb to scrutinise the stranger more narrowly. He was dressed in an Inverness cape; he held his round hat respectfully in one hand, and a brand-new reporter's note-book in the other. He looked very young; his voice was not broken; his cheeks were smooth, and free, as yet, from whiskers; his dark hair was short and curly; his black eyes had a merry look in them: in fine, he was a very good-looking boy.

'I have never seen you before,' remarked Bubb. 'Where did you learn short-hand?'

'At home, sir.'

'Have you ever done such work as mine before?'

'No, sir.'

'Good gracious! Then perhaps you can't do it? I am sure you can't. You don't look as if you could. And what's to become of me? Do you know what three hundred folios mean?'

'No, sir.'

'I thought not,' said Bubb contemptuously. 'Well, then, I'll tell you: it's more than twelve hours' hard work. And what will become of me? If that boy doesn't find some help, I'll hang him.'

'It is true, sir, that I have never done this work before,' persisted the short-hand novice, 'but you can't tell whether I can do it or not till I have tried.'

'An Irishman said something like that when he was asked if he could play the violin,' remarked Bubb severely.

Here his boy-clerk returned. 'I can see nothing but the fog, sir, if you please.'

Under the pressure of business, his master deigned no reply but a look.—'What, is your name?' he demanded of his would-be assistant.

'John Smith, sir.'

'A very remarkable one. Sit down opposite me there, and tell me if I read too fast.' He opened the note-book in which he had taken down the evidence in Jones *versus* Perkins, and began to read aloud. John Smith wrote it down in his own short-hand in the note-book he had brought with him, beginning the questions at the extreme left, and the answers in the middle of the page. He had nearly filled a couple of slips, when Bubb stopped suddenly and watched how far he was behind. Only four or five words.

'Read!' said Bubb.

John Smith read it unhesitatingly. Bubb tried hard not to feel pleased, and failed.

'Write it out on this paper. Begin six lines from the bottom—I will put the heading in afterwards—and mind put the "Qs" and "As" in the margin.'

Without a word, John Smith did as directed, and that in a swift clear handwriting.

'Don't leave blanks,' said Bubb, 'and don't puzzle over a word you can't make out at once; ask me.'

But Smith had nothing to ask.

'You'll do,' remarked Bubb pithily. A bright thought struck him. 'You can't expect, Mr Smith, the same pay as an experienced hand. Twopence per folio is what such a man gets, and we reckon about eight folios in a sheet of evidence. I'll give you three-half-pence; will that do?'

'Yes, sir,' replied Smith humbly. So at their work they went—Bubb dictating about fifty folios at a time to Smith, with directions to fit it in on the right side of a sheet, and then copying out himself the continuation from his own note-book. They worked on thus without interruption, save a cup of tea and a hastily swallowed crust, till between three and four the next morning, when all the evidence was written fairly out.

'Come as soon after three this afternoon, as you can,' said Bubb, as he parted with his new assistant at the door of the office; 'I have a case in Kindersley's court.' Bubb returned to read over, page, and stitch in a neat cover his many sheets of manuscript. Then he made himself a bed on the couch in his own office, and slept soundly till eight o'clock, when his boy-clerk came up from the kitchen with his breakfast.

That night the offices of Mr Bubb presented a noisy and busy scene. The outer one was crowded with assistants, who smoked, and wrote, and talked, and sent out the boy for beer, which they passed to each other under the table—who were constantly asking questions, and making mistakes, and occasionally swearing, *sotto voce*. The door of Mr Bubb's private office was ajar, and from thence his snarl and sneer came to them in rapid sequence. All the evening, they had been taking turns to be dictated to at Mr Bubb's desk, and the wrangling

between him and his slow dictators—his erring favourites—was ever in the ears of all. The law-stationer's boy had worried Bubb into a state of fury. But he never became confused; his clear head revelled in the general distraction. Not so his new assistant, John Smith; he had asked leave early in the evening to work in Mr Bubb's room.

'As you like—on the stairs, if you please, so long as you get it done,' said his master.

It was eleven o'clock; Bubb had given out the last of his notes, and the law-stationer's boy was snoring in a corner, ready to be shaken up for the last sheets. Near them was seated young Smith, straining hard to keep his eyes open, and forcing sore reluctant fingers to finish his task. An assistant brought in the last of his work, and then made a speedy exit. But his master's tongue followed him. Running his eye maliciously over the sheets, Bubb cried out: 'I say, Dixon, do you mean to say you did this yourself?'

'Yes, sir,' responded the assistant from the outer room.

'I can't believe you, Dixon,' replied Mr Bubb; 'there are only sixteen words misspelt.' A loud laugh from his comrades. At this moment the new assistant gave in—his head dropping helplessly on to the desk. Bubb jumped up, and raised him gently, and was about to unfasten his neck-tie and waistcoat, when, with an exclamation of dismay, he drew back as if he had burnt his fingers. Smith opened his eyes, and revived wearily.

'I thought you had fallen asleep, Mr Smith,' said Bubb, in strangely tender tones. 'Have you much to do?'

'No, sir.' And poor Smith went at it again, while Bubb watched him curiously.

'Dixon,' he called out, 'have you gone yet?'

'No, sir.'

'Then come here; I want you.' Dixon entered the sanctum. 'Here's our new friend very tired; perhaps you don't mind seeing him home. He has nearly finished.'

Smith was too fatigued to object, if he had any objections; indeed, he had to lean very heavily on the arm of the good-natured Dixon.

'Come to-morrow with your bill,' said Bubb, as they left. 'The fresh air will revive you.—You will take care of the boy, Dixon?'

In the outer office, amongst the seasoned oldsters, the boy excited much sympathy. Ignoring in their kindness the eye of Bubb, they openly offered him their pewter pots to drink from. Smith faintly thanked them, and declined.

On Saturday morning, Smith presented his first account to Mr Bubb in that gentleman's private office. He paid it at once, cutting off an odd ninepence for luck, as he said. Bubb always contrived to pay first accounts when due; it made people's minds easier under any delays that might take place with other accounts. Smith was retiring with his well-earned money, when Bubb, clearing his throat, detained him with these words: 'Mr Smith, I have nothing to do with your private affairs; you do what I pay you to do; still—still I think you ought to give me a reference.'

Smith blushed like a girl, and stammered out: 'I can give you a note to Dr P— of Bloomsbury; he knows me.'

Mr Bubb eagerly assented. How will he word it? thought he. His curiosity was pictured so plainly in his face, that Smith, with a smile, politely

handed it to him to read. 'Dr P—— is earnestly begged to say a word of recommendation in favour of his young friends the Smiths.' Bubb felt disappointed. He took some interest in this cheap and able short-hand writer, and the clever vagueness of the note still kept him in the dark. He watched Smith from the office-window till he was out of sight, and then started for Dr P——'s. The doctor was very busy; could spare Mr Bubb only two minutes.

'Seeking work from you, sir, I presume? Well, the Smiths are highly respectable and trustworthy; poor from a misfortune. Take my guarantee for any materials however costly you may trust them with, whatever your business may be. Good-morning, sir.'

'Excuse me; I am a cautious man,' said Mr Bubb. 'What misfortune?'

'The father—wealthy man—turned his son out of doors. The daughter left with him, and will not return till he is forgiven. The son is consumptive—won't live long. Good-morning, sir. You have my guarantee.'

On his way back, the sharp-tongued short-hand writer composed a beautiful romance, with himself for the hero, and his new assistant for heroine. The plot ran thus: The discarded son of a wealthy father is ill, and Mr Bubb finds employment for his faithful sister at a reduction only of a halfpenny a folio. She is grateful; she is also not insensible to his personal charms—she loves him. The discarded and consumptive son dies. The wealthy father calls back his daughter to his penitent bosom; and at the expiration of the fashionable term of mourning, Mr Bubb marries his late charming assistant, now heiress-at-law to her father's wealth.

For the remaining weeks of the term, however other assistants fared, there was always something for young Smith. For him Mr Bubb suspended his economical habit; he sat idle himself rather than turn young Smith away. But as business chanced to be very brisk, this was very seldom the case. Dixon always accompanied Smith home, waiting for his younger comrade, if it were necessary. Mr Bubb had always to read over and correct when his assistants were done. But he was not jealous of a man who was only five feet four, and made mistakes in spelling; besides, the fellow did not know Smith's secret, and was luckily too stupid to find it out. Meanwhile, Mr Bubb set about displaying himself in the eyes of John Smith as an unparalleled short-hand writer and a magnanimous man. As luck would have it, he had a heavy case nearly every day, and the usual lot of cheap incapables to help him to get it out. These he made a good foil for his own sharpness, and he did not spare them in that capacity. He dictated from his notes twice as fast as he had had to write himself; and when the slow short-hand writer timidly asked him for a word three sentences back from where he was reading, he would look towards Smith for sympathy, and assume the air of a contemptuous martyr. He did not bully his men so much as of wont, nor did he so frequently make them copy their work over on account of a blot or an erasure. His voice, too, lost much of its acrimonious tone; towards Smith, indeed, it was sickly sweet. In an easy-chair, with nothing to do, young Smith might have had leisure to admire his master towering morally as well as physically above his subordinates; but bending all

the night over ill-written short-hand characters, and puzzling over the mysteries of 'fitting in,' he noted little of the change which was a common topic among his fellows. They, you may be sure, did not neglect to take advantage of the governor's unaccountable softness. They smoked more, wrangled more, and had more beer in. They turned saucy to him.

'I can't make this word out,' remarked Mr Bubb, coming to a sudden stop in his dictation; 'it's strange I can't make it out, for it is written so plainly—so very plain.'

'Then,' said the assistant, 'don't write it so plain the next time.'

But Mr Bubb bore all for the sake of the future—for the sake of the third volume of his romance. However, the cloud over the hot sun of his temper passed suddenly away, and his unhappy assistants were scorched again worse than ever. This was on the last day of Michaelmas Term. On that night, for the first time, Smith did not appear at his accustomed desk. It was a busy night, and his other assistants, so far as erring went, were more human than ever. Bubb missed the quiet, accurate, and ready pen of Smith. He was also tormented by other feelings. These were confirmed when, on the next day, Saturday, Smith did not present his weekly bill as usual. Had he lost him for ever? Would his grand romance turn out an illusion, after all the fine opportunities of temper he had given up?

That evening, he called again upon his reference, Dr P——. He was as busy as ever, and it was not till Bubb had waited half an hour that he popped his head into the room where Bubb was pacing about impatiently, and said: 'Oh, it is you. Well, a reconciliation has been effected. Want no more work. Good-evening, sir.'

Bubb caught him in the passage, as he was stepping back to his surgery. 'Will you give me the address? There is money due, sir.'

'Ah,' said the doctor, 'honest man! Send the money here; I will forward it.'

'And a letter?'

'Yes, anything. Good-evening.'

Bubb went back to his office revolving a love-letter in his mind. 'If,' thought he, 'her short-hand had been the same system as mine, what a lot I could have said!'

The letter was very characteristic. It ran thus: 'MY DEAR MISS SMITH—I send you with this one pound eighteen and eightpence-halfpenny, per favour of Dr P——, for which please forward receipt. Why should you be afraid of letting me know your address? You were not afraid of working beside me night after night in an illegal disguise. Was I ever harsh to you? Did I ever make you write a single sheet over again? Did I ever find fault with your spelling or punctuation? Did I not allow you to estimate the number of folios yourself, and did I ever cut you down, as I do the other fellows? Did I not always read slowly to you, not that you require it, for you are a beautiful short-hand writer, as well as a beautiful woman!'

'That's capitally turned,' said Bubb to himself proudly. 'I wonder what her Christian name is? She called herself John Smith—perhaps it's Jane.' He wrote on: 'My darling Jane, I love you. I think I can even now see your ready pretty little fingers taking down the words from my lips. Oh, do let me see you again! Let me see you in the dress proper to you, in which, I am sure, my dearest

Jane, you must be irresistible. Once your kind master, now your imploring lover,

CORNELIUS BUBB.

P.S.—Don't forget to send receipt.'

But no answer came to this moving epistle, and the cruel silence brought Bubb to such a desponding state, that probably the advent of Hilary Term alone saved his life. Indeed, so disgusted was he with human life, that on Christmas Day he made his landlady, notwithstanding her many protestations, provide a plate of cold boiled beef for his dinner. Hilary Term brought healthful work, his gang of incompetents, and the exhilarating use of his bitter tongue.

One night he was in one of his customary fixes, out of which, somehow, he always contrived to get without loss of professional reputation. He had received unexpected orders to write out some old notes by the next day, and he had nobody to help him. For reasons of his own, he would trust solely to wandering clerks. One of these came in—it was Dixon. He had not seen him since Smith's disappearance.

'Good-evening, Mr Bubb; you owe me fifteen and six,' said Dixon, flinging down his bill.

'Certainly, my dear boy; why did you not bring it before?' and Mr Bubb pulled a handful of silver out of his pocket, and paid the claim without even a grumble. He felt as a sergeant might feel slipping the shilling into the hand of a recruit. 'You are in luck, my boy, to-night,' he said to Dixon: 'there are two hundred folios for us to get through.'

'Are there?' said Dixon drily, as he receipted his bill.

'Yes, come; look sharp, and get to your desk.'

'I am going to the theatre, Mr Bubb, with a friend,' replied Dixon with a grin.

Bubb tried hard, but he could not speak—it was a kind of gasp.

Dixon went on: 'The fact is, I have come into—that is, I am now independent of short-hand.'

'Then what did you want with my fifteen shillings?' asked Bubb, who felt himself robbed on false pretences.

'Here, my lad,' said Dixon to the boy—'here is five shillings for you.' This act of munificence confirmed Dixon's story. He must have fallen into some good thing.

'I wish I had that young Smith here,' said Bubb regretfully, for he was again in a fix.

'I can tell you,' said Dixon, 'what has become of him. He has been sent by his father to Paris to study medicine, at least so his sister told me.'

'What! you know his sister?' asked Bubb eagerly.

'Yes. The fact is, I am—I am engaged to be married to her.'

'To her that used to come here?'

'What the devil do you mean by that, Mr Bubb?' demanded Dixon in rather fierce tones.

Bubb rose and twisted his chair between them, so that Dixon might not be tempted to any foolishness. He temporised: 'I meant to say, Dixon, how did you become acquainted with the family?'

'Oh, I don't mind telling you that. Although my father was a poor barrister, and died before he got much practice, I have a few friends left, and it was at the house of one of these that I met the sister of the young gentleman who used to come here when he was under a cloud. She was so like her brother I was accustomed to walk home with, that I was confounded at first, and I suspected—'

that is, she told me they were twins, and that accounted for the resemblance. She is now waiting for me to take her to Drury Lane. Good-bye, Mr Bubb.'

From that day, no short-hand writer without a beard durst present himself at Bubb's office, and those with beards deplore their ill-luck in having to go.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

THE past month has been fruitful in topics embracing science, art, medicine, the weather, cosmology, emigration, shipwreck, scurvy, and the kine-pest. Some of the recent results of science, particularly as regards instruments of observation and representations of celestial phenomena, were to be seen at the conversazione given by Mr Warren de la Rue, President of the Royal Astronomical Society, at Willis's Rooms. Among the most remarkable objects there exhibited, one was a portion of a meteorite which fell in the south of France in May 1864: it consists of minute crystals of sulphur and a rare kind of iron mingled with a peaty substance resembling London mud, which falls down to powder when placed in water. It was lucky, therefore, that no rain was falling at the time the meteorite fell, otherwise, the fragments would have been washed away, and thus lost to science. Another remarkable object was a photograph of the solar spectrum by M. Becquerel, a celebrated French chemist, in which all the colours have their natural appearance, red, blue, and so forth; and not different tints of brown, as is usual in photographs. This suggests the inquiry: If the solar spectrum can be photographed in its natural colours, why not other objects? A great triumph is in store for any artist or chemist who will photograph a landscape in the natural colours.

A *Sixth Memoir on Radiation and Absorption*, by Dr Tyndall, read before the Royal Society, gives particulars of some experiments on the subject which were attended by unexpected results. Ever since Dr Franklin laid small pieces of cloth on snow, and noticed that the darkest-coloured sank the deepest, it has been supposed that dark colours absorb and radiate more heat than light ones. But Dr Tyndall shews conclusively that this is not the case; but that radiation and absorption depend on other conditions than mere colour, and that in a number of instances the lightest colours absorb and radiate the most heat. Those who wish to study the question with full details, will do well to look out for the next part of the *Philosophical Transactions*, in which the paper will be published.

Mr Huggins, F.R.S., who has rendered good service to astronomy by his spectrum analysis of stars and nebulae, has added somewhat to our knowledge of the constitution of comets. In the course of last month, he got an observation of Comet I, 1866, and found the nucleus to be in the condition of ignited gas, shining by its own light; but the coma, or tail, having no light of its own, shines by reflected light, in the same way as clouds do in our own atmosphere. This is an interesting branch of cosmical science, and when next a brilliant comet appears in our sky, the opportunity will be seized for a series of observations, which, so far as

instrumental means permit, will settle the question.

We have recently seen a self-registering barometer which appears to be worth notice, inasmuch as it is combined with a clock, and can be placed on a mantel-piece or bracket. The graduated portion of the mercurial column is shown at the upper part of the case, and the clock-face at the lower part. Working connections are made between the mercury and the clock-work ; a sheet of paper to serve for a day, week, or month is wound round a cylinder which is moved by the clock, and on this sheet a dot is made which indicates the height of the mercury at each hour of the day or night. The makers of this ingenious instrument are Messrs Frankham and Wilson, Gough Street, London, W.C.

The experiments made under government authority to test gun-cotton, though not yet successful with great guns, have led to encouraging results with small-arms. Cartridges of gun-cotton can now be manufactured which command a range as great as that of powder, and without injury to the rifle, even after firing two thousand rounds. Moreover, certain special advantages are claimed for gun-cotton : it creates but little smoke ; it does not foul the barrel, and the 'kick,' or recoil, is much less than with powder. This being the case, we are not surprised to hear from General Sabine, chairman of the committee appointed to investigate the subject, that gun-cotton cartridges have been largely in demand for sporting purposes during the past shooting-season.

To many readers it will be a satisfaction to know that the rainfall of last year (1865) was greater than the average. This is perhaps an indication that the cycle of drought is ended, and that the gloomy forebodings which some persons entertained as to a long period of deficient rainfall may be laid aside. Between the middle of October and the end of the year, there fell such a quantity of rain as more than made up for the deficiency of the previous months ; and from many quarters we hear that ponds which had dried up are again filled, and springs and small streams which had disappeared are again flowing. This acceptable abundance of water will be confirmed by the effects of the great snow storm of last month. Of course, meteorologists are trying to find out the explanation of all this ; and as the British Meteorological Society has now got a royal charter, and is to become *The Meteorological Society* par excellence, we may expect the members to work with more purpose than ever. An Aeronautical Society is also to be founded, with the Duke of Argyll as president, with the professed object of studying systematically the meteorology of the upper regions of the atmosphere.

As was to be expected, the gales, or rather what may be described as a three-weeks' gale, which ushered in the new year, occasioned much disaster on land and sea. The number of wrecks reported to the Board of Trade was more than four hundred ; significant of a fearful destruction of life and property, yet at the same time suggestive of the heroic efforts made around our coasts for rescue. But the world holds on its way nevertheless, and men and ships put to sea in ever-increasing numbers. Germany even, though not a maritime country, is on the move : 95,000 Germans sailed last year for the United States, chiefly from the ports of Hamburg and Bremen ; and it is expected that the number will be doubled this year. Political dissatisfaction

is perhaps the motive for this multitudinous forth-going.

In connection herewith, it is noteworthy that Professor Welcker, well known in German literature, has offered a reward of one thousand florins for the best essay on the way to get rid of a government without a revolution—that is, a government only which sets itself systematically to violate the constitutional rights of the people.

A paper read before the Graphic Society at Exeter, by Dr Scott, the President, deserves consideration by all persons who take interest in photographic portraits. How often it happens when a person is about to be 'taken,' that he or she dresses for the occasion, perhaps puts on a little jewelry, and so appears in the picture in a style which is not the familiar one. This is a mistake, for the object should be to produce such a portrait as will shew the sitter in his everyday aspect—that in which all his friends know him best. The outrages on true taste perpetrated by men in this particular are many ; but women are offenders in a much greater degree. Dr Scott remarks : 'Blue objects absorb all other rays, and only reflect the blue ones ; red objects reflect the red rays, and absorb the others ; and yellow objects, in like manner, absorb all rays but those which are yellow. A lady going to have her portrait taken in a yellow dress, would naturally think it would come out of a lightish hue, and she would be very much surprised to find that it came out almost black. Hence, if a lady wishes to appear in any particular tone of dress, it is of great importance that the proper colours be selected, and not such colours as will produce darks for lights, and the contrary. It is difficult to get a dark dress and the flesh tints both properly done together ; the radiations from the light complexion of the skin being much more effective on the photographic plate than those from the dark dress. It is very common to see ladies going in dark dresses, with long floating ribbons, or cap-strings of white or blue, large white collars and cuffs, producing pictures of such violent opposition, and blotches of white far larger than the face, that this feature has to be sought for in the picture, and found out, so much as it is thrown into the shade by the parts of dress here mentioned.' As a rule, it would be best that sitters should allow the photographer to tell them how to dress.

Mr R. E. Alison states, in a communication to the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, on the climate of Teneriffe, that he can feelingly testify to the superiority of the climate of that island to that of any European district, for all affections of the lungs. When he left England, he had all the bad symptoms of pulmonary consumption, brought on by a neglected cough, yet, in a very short time, without any medicine, they entirely disappeared. He does not wish it to be supposed that the climate of Teneriffe will cure consumption ; but its warm, dry, equable temperature, which can be obtained throughout the year by varying the altitude, is a most powerful remedial agent. In his opinion, it will do more to ward off the distressing malady than any other part of the world, excepting, possibly, the city of Mendoza, on the eastern foot of the Andes. One of the pleasant places for a sojourn in Teneriffe is Villa de Orotava, at an elevation of 1100 feet, where the lowest winter temperature is 54° F Fahrenheit ; ten degrees warmer than Penzance, which is one of the mildest winter-residences in England. Visitors who

required a yet warmer winter temperature, would find it at Santa Cruz, the port of Teneriffe, where the lowest range of the thermometer in January is sixty-four degrees nearly.

Some of our readers will be interested in Mr Alison's remarks about the canary-bird. 'When I saw it first in its native woods,' he says, 'I could scarcely recognise it as the same species as our domestic yellow warbler, so much is the latter altered by domestication and repeated crosses. The native bird is gray on the wings, the belly is green, and the back a very dark gray. It builds on bushy trees or high shrubs, lays from four to six pale-blue eggs, and sometimes hatches six times in a season. I was surprised to find that each flock has a different song. The note is between that of the skylark and nightingale. The natives assert that the bird is very difficult to rear, and generally dies in a couple of years if kept in a cage.'

Mr Fowler, in his inaugural address as President of the Institution of Civil Engineers, having recommended young men entering the profession to study physical science, the *Times* directed attention to the School of Mines in Jermyn Street, as a place where a knowledge of physical science might be acquired. The *Times* might have added that there are two colleges in London—University and King's—where physical science may be studied with advantage, indeed with more advantage than at the School of Mines, for the latter teaches no mathematics; and it is well known that if a man wishes to make a practical use of his knowledge of physical science, he must combine with it a good knowledge of mathematics.

The Report of the Postmaster-general for 1864 has just been published. Though more than twelve months after date, it is satisfactory to know that the revenue of the Post-office in that year was more than L4,000,000, of which L1,160,000 was profit. The number of letters delivered was 679,084,822; and of these, 170,000,000 were delivered in London alone. In the same year, the increase in the number of inhabited houses in the whole kingdom was 40,000; in London, 10,000; the total number of houses being 3,893,991. It is estimated that the population now amounts to thirty millions.

THE CHURCHYARD YEW.

UNDER the black yew-tree
(Its berries like drops of blood)

I love to sit,

In a moody fit,

Thinking of how to clay and dust,
Canker, decay, and moth, and rust,
Come all that we love, and hope, and trust—
Beauty and Wealth, and Pleasure, and Power,
And Learning, and Sense, and Wit.

Down in your coffin there,

Beauty, answer me now,

As here I sit,

In a cynical fit,

Where is hidden thy jewel-chest?
Where are the diamonds that once did rest
On the rise and fall of thy snowy breast?
They sparkle no more in the gloom and dark,
Than does a *crotin's* wit.

Ambition, thou misled fool,
Thou with the rusty crown,
As I meditate

On thy fallen state,

Open thy coffin lid, and tell
Of the battles thou hast won so well;
How many wretches there bleeding fell,
All for a fort or some farm in a dell,
A mound of earth, or a line on a map,
Wrestling so hard with fate.

Learning, thou purblind thing,

Sage with the half-closed eyes,

Come, answer me,

In my tyranny,

And prove me how thy midnight toil,
Thy waste of wholesome harmless oil,
And all thy fretting and careful moil,
Thy nouns declined, thy accents marked,
Avail in the dull Dead Sea.

Pride, thou art humble now,

Thanks to the sexton's spade;

Around this tree

Lies good company,

Yet none to flatter, or fawn, or bend.
Pomp and Pleasure have come to an end;
Narrow the chamber is left thee, friend:
Pedigrees, parchments, charters, and rolls,
Are little avail to thee.

Wealth, thou art last of all,

Laggard and lazy of old;

Come, knave, up here

From thy velvet bier,

What is that strange frilled robe thou'st on?
'Tis out of fashion, thou simpleton.
Are all thy tinsel and trappings gone?
Yes! time is over for change and freak:
Money is useless here.

Under the Churchyard yew

(Its berries as red as blood)

I love to sit,

In my moody fit;

Round me rise the hillocky graves,
The Dead Sea's green and silent waves,
Death's black banner, the dark tree braves,
As I think of how vain are Power and Wealth,
Beauty, and Love, and Wit.

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